

RESEARCH PAPER

# All Not Quiet on North Western Frontier

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Case study of North Waziristan Agency

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North Waziristan , one among the seven tribal agencies which are more commonly known as Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA), eye of the storm since dawn of millienium.

**All not Quiet on Western Frontier**  
**Levies, Militia, Rifles, Scouts & Army along Durand Line**  
**Case Study of North Waziristan 1895-2012.**

**Introduction.**

The very word Waziristan for last hundred years have become synonyms with military incompetency, defeat, brutality, innovation in military warfare, it is a source of debate on the very nature of military force because if an army well fed, well equipped well trained despite expanding a considerable amount of national exchequer is still unable to wrest the notion of victory from the ill-educated, ill fed, ill equipped and savage tribes men then what is the use of such a military organisation. For last decade a military operation is being conducted in Waziristan by the NATO, America, Afghanistan and Pakistan, still the notion of victory is with these tribes. There are allegations and counter allegation s among all the belligerents as to who is not doing enough to stop this stem of terrorism. As a result the Waziristan has been closed for outside world, there is no media here, and no visitors from outside world and only army and natives are living.

**Culture and civilisation** are two inherent threads which tends to explain a new paradigm to understand the causes of human conflict. ‘Aryans ,Persians all originated from Pamirs’<sup>1</sup> . Some of these Aryan tribes settled in the few of the valleys through which they marched down towards Indus, one such valley is Tochi Valley which is part of North Waziristan Agency today and inhabited by Wazir and Daur Tribe. From 1895 onwards when British established their political control along the Frontier especially in Waziristan this valley alone has been the most violent in nature, often erupting suddenly and then calming down. It has happened in 1898, 1915, 1936 and now again since 2005 this valley is in forefront receiving almost hundred per cent more Drone attacks as compared to any other valley. North Waziristan covers an area of 2318 square miles . Tochi Valley from Datta Khel to Khajuri is fertile and intensively cultivated with the water of the Tochi River. On its North West is Afghanistan, in the North East is Kurram Agency a shia majority, in the South is South Waziristan a , in the East is Bannu and Kohat Divisions or the settled areas of Indus Civilisation

Greek historians and literature are one of the most authentic and widely referred sources since 500 BC. There are other civilisations like China which also have a very rich history preserved. Greek narrates evolution of human society around their island city states. The very first laws and constitutions were formed, Aristotle studied no less than 158 such constitutions of his city states . Greek invaded India under Alexander the Great in 323 BC and from here a lasting bond developed between these two civilisations. One of the major subject of interest among ancient writers has been the role, conduct and very idea of military

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<sup>1</sup> Mattew Arnold& Marie Snell *Sohrab & Rustam an episode*, ,{Werner,Chicago,1896},p-82.

and that of war itself. Greeks had mercenaries troops among them, Alexander had native troops as part of his army.

**Geography** plays an important part in the formation of a civilisations culture, England by virtue of its being island had and still have a different approach where navy is more important than foot army. Arabia is all desert and have peculiar mind-set, India on the other hand is a sub-continent by itself containing many nations and civilisations in it. On the north it is bounded by Himalayas and on west by Hindu Kush, on east by deep thick jungles and on south by a sea.

Almost all migration into India took place from east through Hindu Kush, the ancient Aryans who over powered the native Dravidians also descended through numerous valleys of this mountainous region. There are no less than six major riparian valleys that links the Central Asia or Afghanistan to Indus River, one such valley is Tochi River Valley. These valleys of Hindukush from north to descending south are a amalgamation of racial tribes including Balti, Gilgiti, Chitrali and then pathans which itself are composed of no less than a dozen tribes. From 100 BC to 1763 AD regular invasion of mainland India took place through these valleys, most famous being the Mahmood of Ghazna who in 1000-1038 AD raided and plundered India at will, his most frequent route was through Tochi Valley.

From 1700 AD onwards British East India Company a trading company established itself on the eastern coast of India and from there they moved west ward. By early part of 1800 they had a genuine fear of Napoleon and later that of Russia for their crown of Jewel colony.

## Civilisation

'Clash of civilisations are the greatest threat to world peace and an international order based on civilisation is the surest safeguard against world war'<sup>2</sup>. Whereas the history or the epigraphy of Nile and Euphrates has been able to pass down to us the culture and religion of these two great civilisations in the form of tablets and seals which inform us of the deities, the codes the life pattern of those ancients people with certainty, we know that Gilgamesh fighting with lions that dates back to 3000 years BC it is 1 and half inch in length and is preserved in British Museum, there are quite a number of seals showing men with wings, heavily manned lions then there are very elaborate seals which depicts a sow walking with almost half a dozen of her siblings through a field<sup>3</sup>, but no such thing or evidence was available for India other than the oral traditions which are called Vedas before the archaeological excavation carried out in 1922 in Indus Valley which have been termed as one of the greatest of our time. It is a coincidence that two of the greatest riddles of human civilization were unlocked in the same century the finding of the Pyramids and Indus Valley ruins. Therefore one has to look into the Nile and Euphrates cultures of the past to find the similarities in the Indus Valley civilization as such to fill the vacuum of data.

## Tribes.

Wazirs are an ancient Pathan tribe, Aryan in nature who with the passage of history migrated with the pioneer Aryan tribes and instead of descending down to the Indus Valley

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<sup>2</sup> Samuel Huntington, *Clash of Civilisation* {Penguin, New York, 1998}p-6

<sup>3</sup> Dawn of Civilisations, the seals are marked as such majority of them are in British Museum and Louvre Museum in Paris.

preferred to have their habitat in the mountainous region of Hindu Kush close to the Indus itself rather than dwelling at the plains. Aryans were a fun loving people who were believers in a monotheistic deity. They lived in a close knit clan society where friendship was regarded as a sign of nobility and refusing alms to a person asking for it was looked down. Women were respected yet they were not involved in the spheres of running the society. Intoxication through natural herb was an acceptable part of the society, mother in laws were feared and gambling was a sport. Horse was the most precious property of an Aryan. Above all it was the militant cultures which distinguish these Aryans from other tribes. Rig Veda mention a tribe by the name of Pakhta which is identified with present day Pathans.<sup>4</sup>

### **Waziristan & Forward Policy**

Waziristan came into prominence due to Forward Policy after the annexation of Punjab in 1849. Waziristan proved to be an enigma for the British as the settled districts of Dera Jats were constantly raided by the Mabsuds a distant relatives of Wazirs. The tribal society in Waziristan was primitive in nature, more akin to the early city states of Greece; democrats, without any hierarchical kingship, all being treated equal .. Reconstructing the past from present leaves little to debate that the tribes inhabiting the Waziristan are none other but the Aryans, they are fair in colour, militant, fun loving, prefers clan, monotheistic in nature, enjoys intoxication through herbs, long nose, broad head with plenty of hair and extremely independent in nature. Small villages are scattered all over the agency. The inhabitants lives in villages of all sizes. The general grouping and frequency of villages vary from valley to valley but these are invariably defended by mud bricks wall and towers. A peculiarity of many Wazir villages is their close proximity to large caves, to which the tribesmen have access as dwelling places in winter for the sake of protection from harsh weather. These caves are also admirable as an air raid shelters. The way of life is as primitive as it was almost thousand years in every aspect not only in terms of construction of houses but also in the form of social values which are termed as Riwaj. Each village is the home of a certain clan which for all practical purposes acts and behaves as a sovereign state, formulating and ratifying treaties and declaring war providing amnesty and shelter to outlaws from other clans depending upon either a collective decision or at times acting at their own will. Surrounding grazing grounds are joint property and so are fruit trees and orchards. There is no central hereditary power junta rather it varies with time to time. Polygamy is a common practice which becomes a necessity because of frequent feuds and war. There is no concept of population control rather more the children stronger is the clan and tribe. Women are treated with respect and are seldom seen outside their walled compounds. Kidnapping or rape of females is a rarity. The practising religion is the Sunni sect of Islam. Elders are respected, Jirga is the parliament of the clan where collective decisions are taken and are bound to be observed.

### **Military Organisations**

#### **Levies**

The very first local military force known as Levies was raised in Baluchistan in 1880, and even Khyber Rifles which was raised in 1883 is a classic example of integrating the British way of politics with the tribal culture. In North Waziristan the very first Levies were raised in 1895 which were upgraded to Militia in 1900.

Fundamentally Levies were comprised of men from one tribe or Tochi Valley where as Militia had the same nomenclature and organisation but it was more organised and better

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<sup>4</sup>*Imperial Gazetteer of India Volume 1, Indian Empire Descriptive.* {Oxford,clarendon,1907-1909} pp,360-370.

equipped. Militia had army officers in command who were all British, it also had native officers as well from regular army on deputation.

1919 proved to be a decisive year when almost all Militias revolted in varying degree against their officers because of Third Afghan War. Resultantly majority of militias were upgraded into Scouts including North Waziristan , where in 1922 Tochi Scouts replaced North Waziristan Militia. Scouts had more strength, more weapons and above all it had troops from tribes outside the valley.

Period between 1936 -1947 is very interesting as no less than 30,000 British troops were deployed in North Waziristan to hunt one man Fakir of Ipi. It should be kept in mind that at that period British military needed every man to counter Nazism thus this deployment of such magnitude speaks for itself.

This period also gives an insight of two military cultures working together, one that of regular army with its heavy load of rules and regulations and other that of Scouts with practical and very little bureaucratic channels.

In post 1947 the area resorted to its pre 1895 status ; only difference that of additional roads and other infrastructure but no person of army was allowed to stay inside the tribal area; scouts were exemption. The Russian invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 is another mile stone , not only it provides logical background to the often much debated Forward Policy but also it gives another insight into tribal mind-set especially of Tochi Valley. Tribes did not allow army to operate from their area but they whole heartedly cooperated with scouts. For all practical purpose there was no army inside the tribal area till 2005.

9/11 seems to be a defining moment in our history, when a super power was hit hard in its own backyard , accuses were all from these tribal areas; this brings into lime light the importance of these tribes who for all practical purpose were treated as thing of past.

In North Waziristan the operations between 9/11 till July 2005 were all conducted by the Tochi Scouts with very little casualties, they were able to open up three inaccessible areas of Bangidhar, Kazha and Dwa Toi. Army took over the operational and political control of the agency from 5th July 2005 and till to date is in control with very little to show in its balance of credits to justify enormous spending and colossal casualties. It has not been able to move into an area which was previously not occupied by the Tochi Scouts.

Amidst all this the Corps of Tochi Levies were raised again in 2005 with final passing out of 93 levies taking place in September 2012.

**Militia, Levies and Scouts** are deceptive words having multiple connotations even when they are used in militarily sense. Levies are in classical sense a force which has been levied, comprising of natives who are not professional soldiers rather depicted as a kind of private army. Militia on other hand is even more deceptive in nature. It represents peoples army which is volunteer in nature and recruited from natives such as Illinois Militia, Iraq militia, Druz Militia and so on. Scouts in military terms are akin to the gathering of information ahead of regular army, it is also associated more with Boy Scouts movement. Regular army is a body of professional soldiers who represents state and as such are legally authorised to use force ; they represent the sovereignty of a state.

British ingress towards the frontier was spearheaded by the military formations all irregular in nature, mainly composed of natives with local leading persons responsible for training and

discipline. These formations thus became a symbol of civilisation and around them the native culture has flourished in the area. Bringing economic and social changes.

Within these corps exists a unique and independent culture which is quite contrary to the army culture, this is another theme to be explored that how these varying cultures of uniform have affected the peace on the frontier. In North Waziristan the Forward Policy is still alive and actions of Pakistan are nothing new as compare to the hundred years old policy. Within that policy there were two key elements , one 'Buster & Bolt' and other being 'Warden of Marches'. The overall state policy of either Masterly Inactivity or Forward Policy thus are the cardinal threads. Policies does not die down naturally with the transfer of power rather they are owned by the successor states and Pakistan's policy towards the tribal areas should be seen in this context.

## Hypothesis

There exists varying cultures within a state and nation, in North Waziristan the major and predominant cause of violence is not economical or religious rather it is deep rooted in cultural variations. Regular army has failed to comprehend it and resultantly its presence increases the level of violence.

India by Alexander time had progressed into two distinct riparian civilisation the Ganges/Jumna & Indus with its Punjab tributaries. Alexander had left his Greek lieutenants in the conquered territories which soon after Alexander's death erupted into a civil war with River Indus acting by and large as the boundary. The Mauryan Dynasty under Chandragupta Maurya emerged at the Magadha on the banks of Ganges and later his grandson Asoka expanded the empire but he soon became an ardent Buddhist renouncing all kind of violence. This non violent approach was adopted as the state policy and became an integral part of Ganges culture where as the tribes of Indus Valley especially living in the adjoining mountains retained their Aryan identity.

The very first Islamic army had knocked on the doors of the Central Asia when they were in the hunt of the Firuz the emperor of Persia , Muslims had settled at Merv by 646. Qutaibah ibn Muslim was the governor of Khurasan the north eastern part of Persia who between 710-715 conquered the Central Asia especially the Bactria and Ferghana valley the heart land of the Turks , these Turks were nomadic tribes originating from the Mongolian steppes and one the tribe Ye Hu was able to establish himself in the Jaxartes {Amu Darya} area, Turk was the name given by Arabs to all nomadic tribes of Central Asia thus it does not represent any particular ethnic tribe<sup>5</sup>. In 751 a decisive battle between the Muslims and the Turks who also had the support of the Chinese army took place at .... In which not only the Turks were defeated but it also put an end to the Chinese rule in the area for another thousand years. Resultantly almost all Turk tribes accepted Islam.

Waziristan is perhaps the only tribal area which is afforded the status of an independent country and it is obvious from its name , the suffix of 'stan' is important because it is used with a nation hood concept other examples are that of Afghanistan, Pakistan,

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<sup>5</sup> The Muslim World, Age of Caliphates, p-37

Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan but it was Waziristan which had this name long before any other nation had that.

Waziris are an ancient tribe most probably an Aryan in nature who with the passage of history migrated with the pioneer Aryan tribes and instead of descending down to the Indus Valley preferred to have their inhabit in the mountainous region of Hindu Kush close to the Indus itself rather than dwelling at the plains

The ancient migration of Aryans took place almost 2000 years B.C. and they came down from Central Asia towards the fertile Indus Valley through the passes of Hindu Kush which starting from extreme north includes Karakorum, Mintka, Baroghal, Khyber, Peiwar Kotal or Kurram, Tochi , Gomal and Bolan. The Aryan migration or invasion took place along the rivers flowing from east towards west as each river namely Gilgit, Kabul, Kurram ,Tochi and Gomal ultimately joins with the Indus thus these river beds became the routes. Waziris or Waziristan is the country between the River Kurram and River Gomal.

The tribal structure and the society developed around clan system intermarriages among blood relations bonded the ties and each family settling around some water source. These river are unlike Nile are not based upon a single water reservoir rather the mountain streams called Aligad are formed due to melting of snow and frequent rain . The valleys are thus inhabited by clans who fought with each other as they are doing so even today for the right over water and land.

**Waziristan** as seen from air is beautiful in outlook, it is not as hostile or deathly as the Northern Hindukush mountain territory looks from air, it has green valleys high mountain ranges not exceeding the snowline and plains which seems once were fertile but still the width and breadth is not good enough to have air field in every valley.

On a map of having scale one to a million the eastings from 66 degrees onwards on observes brown colour as predominant the northings corresponding to it that is 32 degrees northwards up till 34 degree the terrain is barren and void of any major water reservoirs two water reservoirs namely Ab e Istada & Dasht Nawar are eye catching because of blue colour, major towns are Ghazna, Gardez & Matun even Kabul is enclosed in the area. The Durand Line which is mark in red, the eastern side of it is has more green colour and finally the Indus is major blue colour showing the water life line thus it is natural to assume that all the population was drawn magnetically towards the Indus. Durand line does not follow any natural riparian division rather it follows the crest line of the mountains and that too not in a straight line but over the passes that allows the movement from east towards the Indus.

Area between the Kurram River or the Peiwar Kotal Pass down south till Gomal Pass or Gomal River is the country of Waziris, it is in terms of historical contest , in terms of administrative boundary the area is divided into valleys thus Valley adjacent to Peiwar Kotal is termed as Kurram Valley and inhabited by tribes other than the Waziris.

The over all topography of the area is pleasant and seems lively when compared to the Balochistan and extreme northern Hindukush. The rivers are the source of life but they seems to have dried out in the era of Aryan migration and one cannot rule out that the major reason and cause of migration was this dearth of water. For last five hundred years these river beds occasionally comes to life due to heavy snow fall or rain which causes the small innumerable riverine and streams to gush down the mountains and joins the major rivers thus the population is based around these beds of fertile land ,over all the area is rocky but not menacing in nature. Mountains are high yet none is higher than 12000 feet. The layout of

ground between Tochi River and Gomal is most pleasant with green pastures and lively valleys dotted with fruit trees and wildlife however the area over all cannot sustain the inhabitants purely on its own produce. The major crop is maize and wheat , rice is not produced in the area. Fruits are in abundance especially the apples, grapes, walnut, pomegranate and watermelon. Weather is tolerable both in winter and summer however the cold weather does force temporary migration of nomadic peoples known as powindahs who at the start of winter season migrates from the highland west of Durand Line towards the Indus Valley and then return to their lands in summer.

This country between latitude 32 – 33 degrees 22 minutes north and longitude 69 degrees 20 minutes to 70 degrees 36 minutes is known as Waziristan and inhabited by waziris as the major tribe. The origin of Waziristan is obscure in history the tradition goes that Wazir son of Suleiman son of Kakai son of Karlan who was the grandson of Ghurghust thus they are described as Karlanri or Ghurghust Pathan, thus Wazir had two sons namely Khizri and Lali . Khizri had three sons namely Musa, Mahmud and Mubarak. Musa was called Darwesh from his religious character and thus clan that is today known as Darwesh Khel Wazir are his descended. Musa had two sons namely Utman and Ahmed which thus forms the sub clans of Darwesh Khel as Utmanzai & Ahmedzai. Mahmud had a son called mahsud which forms the Mahsud Wazir Tribe or clan similarly Mubarak had one son name Gurbuz which forms the Gurbuz Wazir tribe. Thus it is seen that all the clans are interlinked through blood line and they live in the area described above however with the passage of history all these clans of same tribe occupied distinct geographical areas. Gurbuz lives in the area between Tochi Pass and Khost valley, Mahsud occupies the southern edge between the Tochi and Gomal and Uthmanzai and Ahmedzai are found in between Tochi and Kurram River. The other tribes inhabiting the country are Bhittanis and Dauris.